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INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE  
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RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC  
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 4353  
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 6695  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 NEW DELHI 001699

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SUBJECT: DESPITE WILD SPECULATION, UTTAR PRADESH ELECTORAL  
OUTCOME REMAINS CLOUDY

REF: A. NEW DELHI 01675

[1](#)B. NEW DELHI 01508

Classified By: Political Counselor Ted Osius for reasons 1.4 (B,D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Uttar Pradesh (UP) completed its first phase of polling on April 7. Due to the active involvement of an effective Election Commission (EC), the vote went smoothly and was violence free. Notoriously unreliable exit polls predict that the SP and BJP will lose seats, while Congress and the BSP increase their tallies. A huge political drama enveloped the state after the BJP released a scurrilous DVD on April 3 that contained offensive attacks against Muslims, Islam and Pakistan. This time, the EC reacted quickly, issuing arrest warrants against BJP leaders Rajnath Singh and Laljit Tandon and threatening to bar the BJP from the election. Caught by surprise, the BJP first attempted to disassociate itself from the DVD and then staged unconvincing demonstrations against a "scurrilous disinformation campaign." The BJP was hoping to score big in UP so as to increase its political momentum and place Congress on the defensive. However, its confidence was overstated even prior to the release of the disastrous DVD, and it may now do worse than it anticipated. Likewise, media speculation of a dismal Congress showing may be premature. The impact of the Rahul Gandhi roadshow, the DVD controversy, and pervasive rumors that UP's reviled Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav is conspiring with the BJP could provide Congress with a boost, but if the UP results are a disaster, some want the PM removed. Almost everyone agrees that the ruling Samajwadi Party (SP) seat count will decline and that no party is likely to win enough seats to form the government. A protracted period of "horsetrading" after the election is the most likely outcome. End Summary.

The First Phase Goes Well

[1](#)2. (U) The first of seven phases of the UP election went off smoothly on April 7, despite fears of widespread violence, with voting in 62 constituencies spread across 13 districts of the Central and Western Regions. The Election Commission

won widespread praise for its administration of the contest under difficult circumstances. Its deployment of heavy security ensured that voting took place without incident. This area is a Samajwadi (SP) stronghold and this was reflected in exit polls conducted by NDTV and the Indian Market Research Bureau. The polls estimated that, of the 62 contested seats, the SP won 20-24 (versus 24 in the 2002 election). The poll speculates that the rival BSP will up its seats from its current 14 to 16-20, while Congress will increase its tally from the current four to 6-10. Based on its findings, the poll predicted that the final statewide SP tally will decline from 145 to 120-130, while the BSP will increase from 98 to 125-135, with Congress almost doubling its seats from 25 to 40-50. Surprisingly, the poll predicted that the BJP will decline from its current 107 to 80-90. The poll analysis speculates that the SP, BJP and independents and small parties will all lose seats, which will go to the BSP and Congress. Such an outcome would leave no party close enough to the required 202 seats to form the government on its own. (Note: Exit polling in India is notoriously unreliable. End Note).

#### The BJP Blunders

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13. (C) The BJP's April 7 victory in the Delhi Municipal Council Elections (Ref A) provided a shot in the arm to a party already basking in the glow of success. BJP leaders in UP and Delhi have told us they are confident of forming the next government in UP. Over the past several weeks, BJP celebrities have loudly proclaimed that UP will be the next domino to fall in an inevitable wave of BJP victories leading to the return of the party to power in the 2009 Parliamentary

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elections. Apparently confident of their popular support and political momentum, the party leadership must have decided to throw caution to the winds and indulge its extremist wing by releasing anti-Muslim campaign material.

14. (U) On April 3, BJP leader Lalji Tandon released a BJP DVD at a well-attended press conference in Lucknow, giving away thousands of free copies over the course of the event. The BJP has a long history of releasing hateful anti-Muslim propaganda at election time without running into legal problems. This time it did not reckon with the Election Commission and its rising star, Commissioner R. Balakrishnan. The EC moved almost immediately, charging Tandon and BJP national President Rajnath Singh with distributing "inflammatory material capable of creating enmity/hatred among different communities," a crime under the Indian Penal Code and electoral law. The EC also demanded that the BJP "show cause" as to why it should not be prohibited from participating in the election for violation of the model code of conduct. The BJP leadership quickly realized that it had made a huge blunder and tried to disavow the DVD, claiming that it was released without the party's knowledge or permission, but the damage had already been done.

#### Outrageous Misconduct

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15. (U) In another demonstration of the fast-growing power of the media, Indian newschannels showed shocking footage of the BJP video, while newspapers ran excerpts. The video contains the following references to Muslims and Pakistan:

--Pakistan wants to break India into pieces. Hyenas hungry for political power are egging them on.

--Congress and the SP are the government of Mullahs and Mualvis.

--Mullahs and Mualvis consider women their personal property.

--They tell Muslim women that it is their duty to produce

children and increase the population.

--They have issued an order that Muslim women who produce more than 10 children will be given money.

--Hindus will produce two children and Muslims will marry five times and produce 35 pups and make this country into an Islamic state.

--This country will be enslaved by the Muslims.

--We will all have to wear beards and caps and women will be forced to wear burqas.

--When Hindu girls are ensnared by Muslims, they scream and shout but there is no one to listen to them and Muslims have great fun.

--The day is not far away when we will be afraid to even call ourselves Hindu.

--All schools and colleges will be shut down. What will remain open are madrassas from where fatwas will be issued to drive Hindus out of this country.

--Muslims want to make India into Pakistan.

--Hindu girls will not be able to venture from their homes. Who will protect their honor?

and the following scenes:

--An Indian Muslim in a skullcap plants a bomb under a car.

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--Muslims slaughter a cow, with blood pouring from its throat (this scene lasts a full 50 seconds).

--Muslims abduct a Hindu girl and force her to marry a Muslim man.

--Muslims throw a picture of the God Krishna on the ground and laugh.

Congress Reacts

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16. (U) Presented with a golden target of opportunity, Congress and other BJP opponents quickly responded to the BJP provocation, sending a high-powered delegation to the Election Commission on April 9 to demand that it exclude the BJP from the election. Former Prime Minister VP Singh and BSP President Mayawati have also asked to testify. The Congress Minister for Science and Technology, Kapil Sibal, told reporters that no political party that seeks to create ill will between religious communities can be part of the democratic process. Sibal confirmed that Congress will demand a criminal investigation of everyone connected to the DVD and that all the guilty should be prosecuted, stating that "I find it difficult to believe that senior leaders like LK Advani and Venkaiah Naidu were unaware of the contents of the DVD." BJP spokesman Prakash Javadekar responded that the BJP will demand immediate withdrawal of all criminal charges against its leaders. The BJP has staged demonstrations in Delhi, Lucknow and other UP cities against what Javadekar called "a disinformation campaign to defame the BJP."

The Latest Rumint

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17. (C) On April 5 well-connected journalist Saeed Naqvi shared some of the most recent UP-connected rumors with Poloff. According to Naqvi, the BJP and SP have already cut a deal that will allow them to break any deadlock and form

the government in Lucknow after the election. SP svengali Amar Singh purportedly told Naqvi that in the event of a hung assembly, his party could engineer a phony split, with an assigned number of its MLAs moving over to the BJP, allowing it to form the government. Under this arrangement, the rump SP would then sit in the opposition, allowing Mulayam to hold on to his Muslim vote bank while sharing power with the BJP. Naqvi also believes that Kalyan Singh, the BJP's announced candidate for Chief Minister, is just a placeholder who would be cast aside in favor of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's personal favorite, Laljit Tandon (now deeply immersed in the DVD scandal), if the BJP formed the government. Naqvi also related that Railway Minister Lallu Prasad Yadav is absolutely certain that the UP election would result in a "hung assembly" followed by President's Rule. Naqvi interpreted Yadav's statement as an indication that Congress hopes to engineer such an outcome to prevent the BJP and/or SP from assuming power in Lucknow.

18. (C) According to Naqvi, the string of electoral defeats culminating with the recent thrashing in the New Delhi Municipal polls (Ref A) has panicked the Congress leadership, which is increasingly concerned that another electoral defeat in UP will presage the UPA's fall from power in the 2009 elections. Naqvi maintained that Congress circles have determined that if Congress does poorly in UP, the party must stave off disaster by making Prime Minister Manmohan Singh the scapegoat and removing him from office. Family loyalists are purportedly telling Sonia Gandhi that Congress must have a Gandhi family member in the PM's chair to hold on to power and are urging her to make Rahul Prime Minister well before the 2009 contest. According to rumor, Congress has also decided to split UP into three states, one in the east will be called Awadh, after the old princely state, and one in the

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west will be called Porvanchal, with a rump UP remaining in the central region. Congress strategists have purportedly determined that this may be the only way that the party can hope to gain and retain power in the Hindi belt.

Comment - Winners and Losers  
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19. (C) Indian polling is notoriously flawed and should not be too heavily weighted. In this instance, however, the results of the UP exit polls track with our own analysis. We agree with most political observers that the SP will lose seats in this election and will only be able to form the government with the help of another party (with the BJP the most likely candidate). We also agree that Congress has determined that a hung assembly followed by six months of President's rule is the best possible outcome it can hope for. However, the BJP's confidence that it will score great gains in UP, which has been repeated in the media, was probably misplaced even before the DVD controversy. In light of this latest political drama, the SP could take a big hit at the polls. Congress was quick to find good news where it could, and the current BJP distress can only lift its deflated spirits. While English newspapers continue to ridicule the Rahul Gandhi "fish out of water" roadshow, we are hearing from some UP contacts that he has proven to be an effective campaigner who interacts well with the common man in UP, especially the Muslims, who retain a soft spot for the Gandhi family. Rahul's involvement could introduce a new factor into the polls and provide Congress with some extra momentum. Rahul could have the largest potential impact in West UP, with its heavily Muslim population. The release of the BJP DVD, repeated rumors that Mulayam is conspiring with the BJP to dump his Muslim vote bank and join hands with the BJP, and the impact of Rahul's roadshow could convince some Muslims to defect from the SP and give their votes to other parties. The increasing likelihood that no party will win sufficient seats to form the government means UP could face a protracted period of "horse trading" after the polls.

¶10. (U) Visit New Delhi's Classified Website:  
(<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/sa/newdelhi/>)  
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